

Member Spotlight

Bob and Barb Brasses

This month's Member Spotlight features Bob and Barb Brasses. Bob has been a long and valued member of the club for many years and served as director from 2006 through 2009.

Bob was born and raised in the southern part of the St Louis area having gone to high school in Oakville. After high school, he attended classes at Meramec Community College where he was classmates with a cute young lady by the name of Barbara Still. They shared a history class together and Barb was not doing well and needed a tutor, to which Bob willingly stepped to the forefront to volunteer. After a few years of courtship, they were married on December 26, 1976. How is that for picking an anniversary date that is nearly impossible to forget?

Bob graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia with a degree in Agricultural Mechanization. Bob loved everything about the Ag industry and was looking forward to a long career in that field. Unfortunately, recessionary events caused farmers to hold on to existing equipment and there was little need for new and improved products. So, Bob moved on to plan B, which was a career as a software programmer. He worked for several different employers ending with the Maritz Corp.

After his retirement from programming in 2009, Bob took up a vocation that was in line with his avocation, that being dog training. One of Bob's most cherished projects was a dog training program at the Missouri State Penitentiary at Potosi. This program works with the local chapter of the Humane Society to identify dogs for training to be passed on to new owners. In the 10-week program, the residents, under Bob's tutelage, are successfully able to fully train the dogs to near AKC standards then passed on to a new home. This is a model program and beneficial to all involved.

Along the way, Bob and Barb raised both a son and a daughter. Sam and his wife are in the St Louis area and the parents of a son, Luke. Wendy and her husband live in Columbia, Mo and are the parents of Palmer and Eleanor. Bob and Barb brought these 2 adorable children to the last monthly meeting for all to meet.

So, let's talk about cars now. Bob wrote the following article about his 55 Buick in the August 2004 edition of the Gazette.

1960

My first memory of a Buick was my grandfather's "55. Of course, at age 5 in 1960, I hadn't a clue what a Buick was. All I knew was it brought my grandpa and grandma to my home and grandpa was the best playmate ever. The car was big, massive and had those neat holes in the fender.

My dad was a Ford man, as were his brothers. However, we did manage at one time to own a “55 Chevy which, to my dismay, was sold when I was 13.

Grandpa passed away in 1964 and the car slipped into the memories of my youth. That was until my daughter, Wendy, got the old car bug. She would drag me out to see every car she could find from Studebakers to mono painted 50’s Fords. Fortunately, I kept saying, “NO”. One day in 1999, a good friend of mine, Gary Mueller, mentioned that his grandmother had an old ’55 Buick sitting in a garage. I made a quick check of the Internet and was shocked by all the memories that came back: Grandpa hauling my sister and me to the Zoo and driving to Grandma and Grandpa’s home.

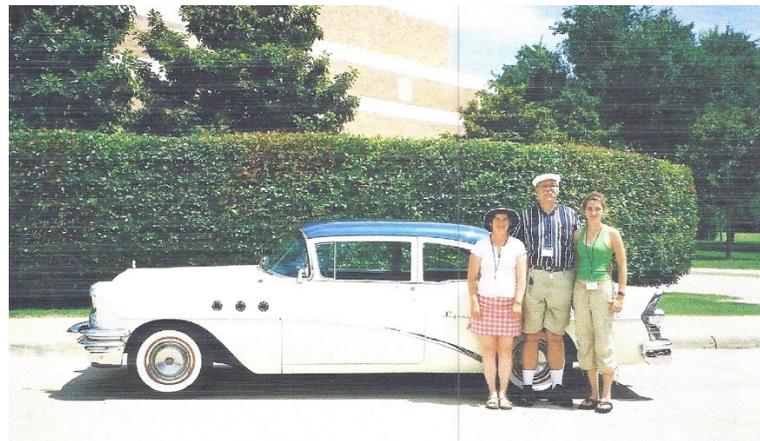
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Only after Gary’s grandmother’s estate was being settled did the car become available. I went over to see the car, a 1955 2-door sedan. The car was identical to the one my grandfather had! At that point it was all but a done deal that I was going to have the car. Of course, I had to convince Barb who, as always, was great and, even though skeptical, allowed the purchase to go forward. (It may have also helped that Barb’s grandfather worked for the Fisher Body Company.) A friend of mine who thought “it will never see the light of day” delivered that car.

Well, as many of you know, it’s on the road and looking pretty. Grandpa’s car even made it to Plano, Texas and back for the 2004 BCA Nationals. What a ride! 70-80 MPH no problems! What a car!



The Brasses’ 1955 as found.



Barb, Bob and Wendy Brasses at Plano, Tx

Barb does look just a little skeptical

Additionally, to add to Bob's story, there are several side notes of interest. When Bob bought the car, it had been sitting for some 30+ years and was pretty well frozen up. A mechanic friend of Bob's advised him that the engine should be good since it was running when parked so many years ago. Be patient and don't get too anxious or impatient. Taking that advice, Bob bought a few gallons of Kroil penetrating fluid and filled up each cylinder and the crankcase. He put a socket on the front crank bolt and attached a 6-foot-long pipe on the end of the breaker bar. Each day, Bob would gently "nudge" the pipe to try to get it to break free. After about a month, one day it moved ever so slightly. Each day it would move a little more. After about a week it would turn over freely. New spark plugs and a tune up kit and the 264 cubic inch nailhead sprang to life.

Bob has had the car road worthy since 2003 and has put about 40,000 miles on it. In addition to the trip to Plano, Texas, he has been far and wide on road trips and various national and regional events. Most notable was his trip to the BCA Nationals in Colorado Springs in 2009. Bob had always wanted to take the car up Pikes' Peak but was somewhat apprehensive fearing vapor lock leaving him stranded on the side of the mountain. After some research on that matter, he determined that a dose of diesel fuel would increase the boiling point of the fuel preventing vapor lock. Adding a gallon of diesel fuel to a tank of gas, up he went. He made it to the top and passed many newer cars along the side of the road. Way to go Bob!!!!

Now that Bob has officially retired from both his primary job and his avocation job, we will be seeing more of Bob and Barb at various club events.

